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สตรีและมังกร: ไดโนเสาร์ ผู้หญิงใหม่ และความกังวล
ว่าด้วยความเสื่อมทรามในนวนิยายเรื่อง The Lair of the
White Worm ของแบรม สโตเกอร์
The Woman and the Dragon: Dinosaur,
New Woman, and Degeneration Anxiety in
The Lair of the White Worm by Bram Stoker

มิ่ง ปัญหา
Ming Panha

อาจารย์สาขาภาษาและวรรณคดีอังกฤษ
ภาควิชาประวัติศาสตร์ ปรัชญา และวรรณคดีอังกฤษ
คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์
E-mail: litwritcrit@gmail.com

บทคัดย่อ

ความรุนแรงอันบังเกิดจากการมองแกนเวลาเป็นเส้นเดียวและตรงไปข้างหน้าในนวนิยายเรื่อง *The Lair of the White Worm* ของแบรม สโตเกอร์ นั้นเกิดขึ้นเพื่อต่อต้านพญางูขาว ซึ่งเป็นไดโนเสาร์ที่ยังมีชีวิต และเลดี้ อราเบลลา มาร์ช ตัวละครที่มีลักษณะใกล้เคียงกับ “ผู้หญิงใหม่” ความรุนแรงนี้เองสะท้อนความกังวลเกี่ยวกับความเสื่อมทรามของเผ่าพันธุ์มนุษย์ในสมัยวิกตอเรียน ไดโนเสาร์สะท้อนการเสื่อมถอยของเผ่าพันธุ์มนุษย์เนื่องจากนิทรรศการไดโนเสาร์ซึ่งมีชื่อเสียงในสมัยวิกตอเรียนที่ซีเดนแนม พาร์กได้จัดเส้นทางนิทรรศการย้อนกลับไปยังยุคดึกดำบรรพ์ โดยมีรูปปั้นไดโนเสาร์ต่างๆ อยู่ที่ปลายทาง นอกจากนี้พญางูขาวในนวนิยายเรื่องนี้ถูกมองว่าเป็นสัตว์ดุร้ายป่าเถื่อน มีจิตใจแข็งกระด้าง และไม่อาจเห็นอกเห็นใจสิ่งมีชีวิตชนิดอื่นได้ อย่างไรก็ตาม คำบรรยายฉากศพของทั้งพญางูและสิ่งที่เชื่อว่าเป็นเหยื่อของพญางู ซึ่งถูกทำลายด้วยตัวละครที่เป็นมนุษย์นั้น แสดงให้เห็นความรุนแรงและ “ความไร้มนุษยธรรม” เพราะความคิดที่ว่าความเห็นอกเห็นใจต่อสัตว์เป็นคุณลักษณะของมนุษย์นั้นเป็นที่แพร่หลายในสหราชอาณาจักรช่วงศตวรรษที่ 19 เมื่อตัวเรื่องรวมพญางูกับเลดี้ อราเบลลา มาร์ช ผู้มุ่งมั่นจะแต่งงานกับชายฐานะร่ำรวยนั้น เราอาจตีความได้ว่าความกังวลเกี่ยวกับความเสื่อมถอยและเสื่อมทรามทำให้นวนิยายเล่มนี้โจมตีผู้หญิงใหม่และผู้หญิงที่เรียกร้องสิทธิเลือกตั้ง เพราะผู้หญิงเหล่านี้ตั้งคำถามกับเพศวิถีของผู้หญิงและอาจไม่คิดมีทายาท ในเมื่อเลดี้ อราเบลลาสามารถรวมร่างกับพญางูได้ด้วย เราจึงอาจตีความได้เพิ่มเติมว่าเธอมีลักษณะเป็นแม่มีลึงค์ ซึ่งทำทนายปิตาธิปไตยก่อให้เกิด

ความกังวลเกี่ยวกับการตอนในหมู่นักชาย และทำให้เพศสถานะและเพศ
วิถีของเธอกำกวม อย่างไรก็ตาม ความเข้มแข็งของพลังอำนาจนักชาย
เพื่อเอาชนะ “สัตว์ร้าย” ในนวนิยายได้ นั่นก็ต้องอาศัยความสัมพันธ์ใน
กลุ่มเพศเดียวกัน ซึ่งอาจนำไปสู่จุดจบของเผ่าพันธุ์และไม่ให้กำเนิด
ทายาทเช่นกัน

ดังนั้น บทความชิ้นนี้จึงมุ่งหมายที่จะชี้ให้เห็นว่านวนิยายเรื่องนี้
ตั้งคำถามกับการสร้างความชอบธรรมให้กับความรุนแรงอันเกิดจาก
แนวคิดเกี่ยวกับความก้าวหน้าและอนาคต โดยแสดงให้เห็นความย้อน
แย้งที่อยู่ใจกลางการรักษาเผ่าพันธุ์ของมนุษย์

คำสำคัญ: วิทตอเรียน การตกต่ำเสื่อมทรมาน ไดโนเสาร์ ผู้หญิงใหม่
ปีศาจปีศาจ

Abstract

With the concept of progressive and single temporal axis, the violence in *The Lair of the White Worm* by Bram Stoker is caused against The White Worm, a living dinosaur, and Lady Arabella March, a figure similar to a New Woman, by degeneration anxiety concerning the human race. Dinosaurs, in Victorian period, reminded human beings of devolution as the famous Victorian dinosaur exhibition at The Sydenham Park had organised the route of the exhibition back in primaeval times, with terrifying dinosaur sculpture at the end of the route. Moreover, the White Worm is seen in the novel as primitive and thus hardened and incapable of sympathy. However, the description of the carcasses of both the Worm and its supposed victims, after being eradicated by a group of human characters, show violence and “inhumanness” as the idea about human sympathy for animals had become prevalent in the nineteenth-century Britain. As the story turns out to merge The Worm with Lady Arabella March, who often devises rich marriage for herself, it could be interpreted that, out of the anxiety of devolution and decadence, the novel attacks New Woman and suffragettes, some of whom question feminine sexuality, as they could lead to no posterity. As Lady Arabella could merge herself with The Worm, she becomes a phallic mother, who disrupts patriarchy and evokes

castration anxiety among men, making her gender and sexuality ambiguous. However, the strength of male power in the novel also requires homosocial relationship among men in order to conquer “the beast” in the novel, and yet homosocial relationship could also lead to the end of human race, with no posterity. Thus, this paper aims to show that the novel questions the justification of violence with the idea of progress and futurity by showing ironies at the heart of the preservation of the human race.

Keywords: Victorian, Degeneration, Dinosaurs, New Woman, Patriarchy

1. Introduction

the Woman and the Dragon

The Victorian period, of the whole British historical timeline, was seen as a period of progress and imperial power, and yet it was rife with anxieties about decline in its last ten years. British society was fraught with anxieties about change and degeneration due to its decreasing imperial power as well as the economic recession in 1880s. The degeneration anxiety had started to emerge, at the latest, around the British loss at the first Boer war (1880 – 1881), where the unhealthy military recruits, mostly the poor, were sent. The loss caused the revision of both the imperial power and the living condition of the poor. It also ignited a great deal of fantasy about the decline in the future, especially the fantasy and anxiety about human extinction.

It is clear that human identity was also in crisis as, according to Ledger and Luckhurst, there were questions whether, after 1900, the progress of human civilisation would continue unabated and whether human beings would devolve.¹ This anxiety resulted from two main ideas: Darwinian evolution theory

¹ Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, eds. *The Fin De Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, C. 1880-1900* (Oxford England: Oxford University Press, U.S.A., 2000), 3.

and the idea about “the human” in the late nineteenth century. The publication of Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* in 1859 brought about a great deal of change in science and the concept of human identity in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Human beings, according to Darwin, are not created by God but evolve from apes. The idea that living beings evolve from one another challenges Genesis, which explains that every organism was created separately and they would reproduce “after their kind.” Evolution theory by Darwin thus blurs the line between human beings and other animals. Darwinian thinkers, such as Herbert Spencer, also illustrated that the evolutionary bond cannot be easily broken.² Yet, Harriet Ritvo argues that though Darwinian evolutionary theory expels God and decreases holiness of human beings, humans have taken the divine throne.³ As Darwinian evolutionary theory shows evolution as progress and improvement, human beings, which are placed at the end of the evolutionary timeline, become the perfect beings. However, the concept about human identity in the late Victorian period was not applied with all *Homo sapiens*, but the title “human” is

² See Herbert Spencer, “Principles of Biology (1864 - 1867),” (excerpt) in Laura Otis, ed. *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology*, Reissue edition (Oxford University Press, USA, 2009), 285 - 289.

³ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*, New edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 41.

attributed to a particular group: upper-class and middle-class British and European people. Darwinism had influenced almost every aspect of social and cultural theories in the period, and thus brought about the idea of evolutionary ladder, which justified the superiority of one particular race over others. This ladder, which relied on the idea of single temporal axis, compared humans from all around the world and judged their civilisations with imperialist bias, showing some cultures as less human than others. The ladder thus supported the imperialist apologists to continue their colonial projects.⁴ One of them, Sir Francis Galton, even justified colonial projects by considering them natural since the superior race would naturally vanquish the inferior.⁵ The colonised were thus seen less humane than the colonisers. Moreover, as the economic recession in the 1880s leads to the revision of the living condition of the poor⁶, most books about the slum area consider the poor and their own culture similar to that of the savage Africans. William Booth in his *In Darkest England and the Way out*, a contemporary work which described the living condition of the poor, compared “Darkest England”

⁴ Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, eds. *The Fin De Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, C. 1880-1900*, xvi - xvii.

⁵ See Sir Francis Galton, “Inquiries into Human Faculty and Development (1883),” (excerpt) in Laura Otis, ed. *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology*, 478 - 483.

⁶ Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, eds. *The Fin De Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, C. 1880-1900*, 25.

to “Darkest Africa” and considered the poor not different from savage.⁷ The representation of the poor as savages challenged the idea of the British or the European as human beings and emphasised the decadence of the empire of the human race.

Though Darwinian evolution theory challenged God and enthroned human beings, at the fin de siècle the idea of Darwinian human ascendancy has been questioned by the idea of scientific human degeneration by a great number of scientists.⁸ The notion of degeneration does not only challenge the power of the human, but also remind them that they are a part of the natural laws. Nature does not function only as a background or a resource for human beings, not only as something outside them, but they are subject to the laws of nature. The nature-culture dichotomy is thus challenged; humans cannot separate themselves from the law of nature anymore.

The extinction of dinosaurs could be one of the issues that support the idea of degeneration and blur the boundary between nature and culture. The extinction of the great animal obviously evoked fear concerning decadence as it showed that the pow-

⁷ See William Booth, “In Darkest England and the Way Out (1890),” (excerpt) in *Ibid*, 45 - 49.

⁸ See Edwin Ray Lankester, “Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism (1880),” (excerpt) and H. G. Wells, “Zoological Retrogression (1891),” (excerpt) in *Ibid*, 3 - 12.

erful creatures could also collapse. Despite a great amount of scientific research, Victorian knowledge about dinosaurs and their extinction could be considered both scientifically real and imaginary. Victorian periods saw the emergence of geology and palaeontology and these sciences concerning primeval lives require human imagination, which could be anthropocentric, and scientific evidence. Imagination is greatly required as the subjects of the studies are all extinct. Consequently, the sciences about dinosaurs blur the boundary between fact and fiction, and because of this, they challenge the idea of cultural construction and nature. The science requires the construction of the model, and thus mixes the art with it. The dinosaur sculptures which evoked the idea of degeneracy of the human species in the Victorian period are the ones displayed at the Crystal Palace. First exhibited at The Great Exhibition of 1851, the dinosaur sculptures were moved to Sydenham, along with the Crystal Palace. The exhibition was certainly to show the progress of human civilisation, which was emphasised by the juxtaposition of the sculptures of the primitive races and the dinosaurs. However, the contrast failed as, according to Nancy Rose Marshall, the exhibition route at Sydenham was in reverse: the visitors would see the grandeur of civilisation first, and they would go further back in time.⁹

⁹ Nancy Rose Marshall. "A Dim World, Where Monsters Dwell": The Spatial Time of the Sydenham Crystal Palace Dinosaur Park," *Victorian Studies* 49, no. 2 (2007): 286 - 301.

Instead of heartening the British visitors of their human race, fear and repulsion were evoked by the sculptures of dinosaurs preying upon each other. For some thinkers, the idea of the extinction of the dinosaurs might boost morale about human ascendancy over animals as their death paved way for mammals and of course human. Yet, the exhibition at Sydenham worked in the opposite way. It caused fear of human extinction and degeneration. A publicity stunt for the dinosaur exhibition even caused fear of the return of the swallowing past with the picture of Richard Owen, a renowned scientist and supervisor of the dinosaur project, with others geologists dining in the model of a dinosaur.¹⁰ The idea of being eaten or swallowed up by the past is thus evoked by this dinosaur exhibition in Britain, not the pride in human civilisation and progress.

Furthermore, in the late nineteenth century, this anxiety was highlighted by scientists, who also compared animal degeneration to human one, suggesting possibilities of the decline of the human species and, certainly, human civilisation. The re-reading of the life cycle of ascidians, or sea squirts, which were suggested by scientists such as Edwin Ray Lankester and science fiction writer such as H. G. Wells as belonging to the phylum of the vertebrate as well as human, evokes nightmare of human degeneracy since the adults of this species stick themselves to a

¹⁰ Ibid, 297.

rock, while the younger ones can swim with its tail.¹¹ In that period, the growth of an embryo was considered similar to the process of evolution. For example, before a human baby was born, it evolved in its mother's womb from a lower animal form. Thus, a growth of an individual of a species entails its evolution. The "reverse" growth of ascidians suggests devolution, instead of evolution. Because ascidians could be included in the same phylum, cordata, as human beings, its degenerate life could be exemplary for the notion of degeneration.¹² The image of human degeneration suggested by the two writers mentioned above, however, was not clearly physical but social. The critique of lethargy which was used to describe degenerate lives of animals such as ascidians and lungfish in the tropics, shows not only biological fact, but also Victorian work ethics. Similarly, Max Nordau, a Jewish Hungarian doctor, composed *Degeneration*, a tome containing diatribes critiquing symbolist, impressionist, and decadent artists and authors. The harsh criticism includes the "diagnosis" of degenerate disease; the degenerate, which mostly meant the artists and the authors aforementioned, could be noticed by their deformed anatomies and their lack of sense

¹¹ Edwin Ray Lankester, "Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism (1880)," (excerpt) and H. G. Wells, "Zoological Retrogression (1891)," (excerpt) in Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, eds. *The Fin De Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, C. 1880-1900*, 3 - 12.

¹² H. G. Wells, "Zoological Retrogression (1891)," (excerpt) in *Ibid*, 8.

of right and wrong.¹³ These “infected” arts would lead to the dusk of nations and the fall of human civilisation. Again, this could be seen that degeneration anxiety is not merely physical or biological, but also social.

The concept of the socially constructed “human” identity in Victorian period was also insecure in both realm of the social and the biological. The Victorian social sciences, with the influence of Herbert Spencer’s Social Darwinism¹⁴, explored and identified social problem scientifically, considering the poor and the racial other degenerate and less human. Yet, the research of the Victorian social sciences brought the “subhuman” or the “animal” to the proximity of humanity, and could lead to the contamination of the human and the nonhuman. After economic recession in the 1880s, there was the need to “confront poverty in all its horrors.”¹⁵ The sensational narrative about lives of the abject urban poor, which appeared in newspaper, brought the poor in Victorian Britain closer to the more “human” class, showing the “biological” fact about their deformity as well as their diseased area of habitation. The unhealthiness of the poor was emphasised by the British loss at the first Boer war in South

¹³ Max Nordau, “Degeneration (1895),” (excerpt) in *Ibid*, 16.

¹⁴ See Herbert Spencer, “The Principles of Sociology (1876),” (excerpt) in *Ibid*, 321 - 326.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 25.

Africa, as the recruits, mostly from the poor, were believed to be infirm. The British army in ill health led to the retrospection about the unhealthy living condition of the poor as well as the fading glory of the British Empire. The loss at the first Boer War also signified the decline of the British race. Also, anthropologists in the period saw the overly reproduction of the poor as the cause of this degeneration. It could be seen that the empire of human was considered declining because of the inferior subhuman race, both the colonised and the poor. The fading glory of the British Empire thus leads to a novelistic genre called “invasion fantasy”¹⁶, which narrates a story of foreign invasion. Some of them, such as *She* by H. Rider Haggard or *The Beetle* by Richard Marsh, feature a monster from the colonised country desiring to conquer Britain. Thus, it was obvious that there was an anxiety that the human-animal boundary was also being threatened.

What also challenged the realm of the social and the biological in the Victorian period the most is the New Woman. It is not that women are considered subhuman similar to the poor or the savage, but New Woman challenged the Victorian idea of motherhood, which was seen as the nature of the Victorian domestic space and, certainly, the birth of human civilisation. The figure of mother for the Victorians became the realm of both the biological, as one who gives birth to a member of the human

¹⁶ Ibid, xvi.

race, and the social, as the angel of the house, the protector of domestic space, which is the base of human civilisation. New Women were seen by a great number of male contemporary novelists and journalists as either pretentious, educated bore, or oversexed vamp¹⁷, who challenge motherly duties. The essays against marriage and women's forced domestic life, proposed by, for example, Mona Caird and Ella Hepworth Dixon¹⁸, were considered alarming because it shook "the foundations of society and the sacredness of the home"¹⁹. New Women were thus seen as destroying the nature of women as well as the rudiments of civilisation.

The Lair of the White Worm by Bram Stoker, published in 1911, showed two signs of degeneracy which challenge nature and culture and emphasise the extinction of the human race: a New-Woman figure and a living dinosaurs. The last novel by Bram Stoker starts with Adam Salton's journey from Australia to his great uncle's residence at Peak District, England by his great uncle's request to continue his race. Yet, the mission of continuation brings him to other residents: his great uncle's friend Sir Nathaniel De Salis, his beloved Burmese-British Mimi Wat-

¹⁷ Ibid, 75.

¹⁸ See Mona Caird, "Marriage," (1888) (excerpt) in Ibid, 77 - 80 and Ella Hepworth Dixon, "Why Women Are Ceasing to Marry," (1899) (excerpt) in Ibid, 83 - 88.

¹⁹ Ibid, 77.

ford, her Anglo-Saxon cousin Lilla, the megalomaniac Edgar Caswall, the African slave Oolanga, and, most importantly, Lady Arabella March who owns Diana's Grove or The Lair of the White Worm. Lady Arabella March, a mercenary Anglo-Saxon widow who plans to marry rich Edgar Caswall, is believed to be connected with the worm, the legendary dinosaurian serpent, in her house. She is even believed to be its transformation. Yet, Edgar Caswall desires Lilla and, with the help of Oolanga and Lady Arabella, tries to win control over Lilla by his hypnotic skill. Lilla is almost always helped by Mimi and survives. Mimi is thus threatened by the Lady, who tries to help Edgar, and Salton has to protect her by marriage. Lilla dies when Mimi is kept away from the worm. Thus, with the belief that Lady Arabella is the worm's alter ego, in the end, the worm is killed by a dynamite, which, with the help of a thunderstorm, destroys Diana's Grove and Castra Regis, where Caswall resides. In the orifice which the white worm resides, Adam Salton and Sir Nathaniel De Salis finds a great mass of white earth, which makes the worm white and is the material of porcelain industry. The symbols of degeneration, the worm and Lady Arabella March, are destroyed and dawns the new era of human beings. The name of this article is thus The Woman and the Dragon, which comes from the Biblical book of Revelation. At the apocalypse, the whore of Babylon will appear with a seven-headed monster, symbolising sins

and blasphemy.²⁰ Similarly, at the period rife with degeneration anxiety, the novel opts two well-recognised symbols: a wayward woman and a serpentine monster.

This article thus focuses on this violent preservation and the desire to continue the human race, which was induced by fin-de-siècle concept of human degeneration, and considers this idea of preservation and continuation self-contradictory because the process of preservation of the human race in the novel questions the idea of the human civilisation. As the novel associates human with sympathy and kindness, which corresponds with the animal right movement in 1830s, some bestial characters, Lady Arabella included, were represented as unkind and hardened. Yet, the death of the worm and Lady Arabella, caused by Adam's dynamite, was described in great details, and these details can question Adam and his mentor's humaneness. As Lady Arabella, a mercenary murderous female figure, could link or even transform herself into a phallic worm, her ambiguous gender and sexual identity thus challenges the female domestic space in heteronormative Victorian society. Yet, the rescue of heteronormative order for human civilisation requires male homosocial²¹

²⁰ Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett, eds. *The Bible: Authorized King James Version* (Oxford: OUP Oxford), 2008.

²¹ Homosociality is a concept by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. She argues that homosociality suggests close connection or friendship of people of

relationship among the Saltons and Sir Nathaniel De Salis, as well as female homosocial relationship between Mimi and Lilla Watford. Though seductive Lady Arabella certainly could not and does not intend to reproduce, the homosocial relationship also bars reproduction, and, certainly, the human progress and civilisation. The idea of human-caused violence in the novel is read with Donna Haraway's Chthulucene imagination, the imagination against the era of anthropogenic disaster in hope of ecological cohabitation so as to rehabilitate the planet. The novel, though it somehow questions itself, insists on the preservation of the human race, and despises beasts which challenges human domination.

2. Literature Review

The Lair of the White Worm was approached mainly with feminist readings, along with the analysis of the British imperial decline and most of the criticisms consider the White Worm only as a phallic symbol and a reminder of the primitive past. In this research article, I would like to discuss four criticisms which were going to be used in the textual analysis, and show how my argument adds up on them.

the same gender. See "Introduction," in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Revised edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 1 - 20.

Concerning female body and the British Empire, Jennifer Devere Brody's epilogue of her book *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture*²² and Piya Pal-lapinski's chapter "Tropical Ovaries: Gynaecological Degeneration and Lady Arabella's "Female Difficulties" in Bram Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm*"²³ in her book *The Exotic Woman in Nineteenth-century British Fiction and Culture: A Reconsideration* could be ideal examples of the reading of female characters in relation to the idea of races. Brody compares and contrasts Lady Arabella, an Anglo-Saxon monstrous woman, and Mimi Watford, a "black" Burmese-British motherly woman, to show how eventually the "black" woman is chosen in order to continue the human race while the Anglo-Saxon became degenerate and daemonised. Brody then argues that the birth of the new British race might require a conglomeration of races, rather than racial purity. In terms of the British race, Pal-lapinski focuses on the degenerate British woman in Victorian gynaecological discourse of "tropical

²² "Epilogue," in Jennifer De Vere Brody, *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 170 - 176.

²³ "Tropical Ovaries: Gynaecological Degeneration and Lady Arabella's Female Difficulties," in "Bram Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm*," in Piya Pal-Lapinski, *The Exotic Woman in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction and Culture: A Reconsideration* (Durham, New Hampshire: UPNE, 2005), 74 - 86.

ovaries”²⁴, a set of symptoms of deformed ovaries occurring among British women in the colonies, especially in India and Bengal, returning to England. The return of the degenerate womb was seen as a threat to the progress of the British nation as the degenerate, or “morbid”²⁵, womb gave birth to infirm population. Pal-Lapinski considers the unwholesome orifice of the worm Lady Arabella’s “female difficulties”, or tropical ovaries. The phallic worm was also seen as a part of vaginal degeneration as Pal-Lapinski compares Lady Arabella to the diagnostic description of suffragettes and prostitutes by Cesare Lombroso, a contemporary criminal anthropologist, and Parent-Duchâtelet, who wrote *De La Prostitution dans la Ville de Paris*.²⁶ What resembles Brody’s argument is that Pal-Lapinski suggests the unmarriageability of the white woman, Lady Arabella, which finally posits a question where the degenerate womb originated, at the centre or the periphery. The centre of England thus became Alien. According to Pal-Lapinski, the decision of choosing the Eurasian, instead of the pure Anglo-Saxon woman, might be a mistake, because Mimi...

²⁴ Ibid, 74.

²⁵ Ibid, 76.

²⁶ Ibid, 81 - 82.

has, through her Burmese mother, inherited the morbid womb. Despite Adam's attempt to co-opt her hybridity, she's always on the verge of slipping into Arabella's Lair, which, in true vampiric fashion, if not capable of reproducing the colonizing race, is always capable of reproducing itself as other [.]²⁷

Pal-Lapinski explicates her argument with examples from the novel: after Diana's Grove was burnt to the ground, the obnoxious animals came out of the orifice. The obnoxious womb produces obnoxious creature after itself. Pal-lapinski, to conclude, shows degeneration anxiety through the intersection of gynaecological and ethnological discourse in the Victorian period concerning "the morbid womb", which could reproduce degenerate races.²⁸

The two articles mentioned clearly interpreted the representation of the female body and its entanglement with the imperial decline. How this research article differs from them is the addition of the ecocritical dimension. The interpretation about Lady Arabella and Mimi Watford in this article is in the same way as these two articles, but the worm, or the dinosaur,

²⁷ Ibid, 85 - 86.

²⁸ Ibid, 86.

is to be contextualised. The idea of farm and quarry has to be added to the textual analysis as well.

David Seed's "Eruptions of the Primitive into the Present: *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and *The Lair of the White Worm*"²⁹ reveals degeneration anxiety in both texts by showing how commodification of the past in the Victorian period, which started in 1850s, shows anxiety about the disruptions from the past. In the section for *The Lair of the White Worm*, Seed compares the plot to the medieval legend of The Lambton Worm, mentioned in the novel and other literary writings about beasts and monsters, which are "The Terror of Blue John Gap" by Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Mark of the Beast" by Rudyard Kipling, and The Island of Doctor Moreau by H. G. Wells. He shows the similarity between *The Lair of the White Worm* and Doyle's short story in terms of the beast as evolutionary misfits, while the two other writings could be related to Stoker's *Lair* because of its narrative about the animal in human. Seed then argues that the animalistic quality in the human in the novel suggests the idea of atavism and the degenerate race, which could be seen clearly in the case of Edgar Caswall the Roman and Oolanga the African slave, and epitomises in the case of Lady Arabella, who became

²⁹ David Seed, "Eruptions of the Primitive into the Present: The Jewel of Seven Stars and The Lair of the White Worm," in Hughes, William, and Andrew Smith, eds. *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic* (Basingtoke [England]: Macmillan Press, 1998), 188 - 202.

a dinosaur. Seed also argues that Lady Arabella does not only threatens human-animal order, but also the sexual order, with her phallic snake transfiguration and the vaginal orifice which contains the worm in her house. However, Seeds sees that the animalistic disruptions of timeline and order are to end and the era of the human has to begin again, with the suggestive name of Adam. Seeds does not forget to reinstate, in the end, that the monster could still re-emerge and could not be easily concealed or eradicated.

It could be clearly seen that Seed's argument is quite similar to the argument of this research article, and yet Seed does not contextualise enough, which could shed light more on how dinosaur and New Woman become the symbol of degeneration. Moreover, the analysis seems to scatter. Seed mainly discusses the idea of the emergence of the past in the present, but digresses to gender and animality, without clearly linking both of the issues and the past. He makes connection very clearly in the case of *The Jewel of Seven Star*, showing how collection of the historical artefact could haunt and be ethically questioned.

Last, but not least, David Punter's "Echoes in the Animal House: *The Lair of the White Worm*"³⁰ reveals the problematic reading of this fragmented text as well as suggests possibilities of

³⁰ David Punter, "Echoes in the Animal House: The Lair of the White Worm," in *Ibid*, 173 - 187.

interpretations, focusing mainly on sex, animal/animality, landscape, and language. Punter firstly poses the epistemological question about the revelation of the White Worm, especially how the readers are suspended from its revelation despite the close relation of Lady Arabella March and the White Worm, “which is obvious virtually from the beginning.”³¹ Punter then asks a question about knowledge and suspension of it, as the novel is full of “endless hesitations and complex evasions”³² as well as “endless departures of apparently human agents to uncover the deferred secrets of the house, or well, or crypt.”³³ Punter then focuses on the secret of animalistic sex hidden, or actually deferred to be revealed, under the landscape of sexual frustration, and argues that this secret and its impulse breaks down the coherence of the text. Punter seems to digress around sex, animals, and landscape, and yet insists on stating that the novel is also chaotic and incoherent. In the end, Punter argues that the text leaves the readers with frustration “in the presence of irreconcilable materials” due to its psychic pressure, and because of this pressure, the text could not be read coherently. The “echoes” in the name of the article, in my own analysis, could mean the tumult of all the voices in the text which is eventually deafening and incomprehensible.

³¹ Ibid, 174.

³² Ibid, 175.

³³ Ibid, 175.

Punter's virtually comprehensible reading of the fragmented, incoherent text has a great number of useful readings: the frustration of the reader at the end of the novel, the undeniable materiality of sex and genitalia, and the psychic pressure, or the repression, concerning the animal under the veneer of civilisation. Yet, again, this research article certainly differs from Punter's as it contextualises its main focuses as well as adding the aspect of ecological cohabitation.

Overall, the aforementioned criticisms of *The Lair of the White Worm* have the same focus as this research article, and yet mostly lack either historical context or ecocritical aspect. This research article hopes to fill the gaps and contribute another interpretation relevant to the present-day issue of ecological disaster.

3. Theoretical Approach

This article chooses to provide historical context to the text as well as adding the ecocritical aspect to the text. The historical context provided mainly concerns the late nineteenth-century Britain, especially the New Woman as well as the history of dinosaur discovery and exhibition. These two aspects will give meaning to female characters such as Mimi Watford and Lady Arabella March, and also the Victorian attitude and sciences about primitive lives.

The ecocritical concept that could be used to link animal, woman, and the apocalyptic atmosphere best is the Chthulucene imagination by Donna Haraway, in her article “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, and Chthulucene: Making Kin”.³⁴ Chthulucene imagination could be seen as an answer to the Anthropocene, “a geological time marked by the decisive human “terraforming” of Earth as such.”³⁵ The first significant mark of this period is around 1784 when the steam engine was used around the world for the first time.³⁶ It is also argued that, strangely, the Anthropocene, literally meaning a geological period of the human, brings the human to the forefront of the nonhuman and makes human unable to deny their agency. The Anthropocene is thus the period when nature and culture could not be separated, as well as the social and the biological.

The late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, a hundred year or more after the start of the Anthropocene, see the emergence of writings and philosophy concerning the realisation of the Anthropocene, or at least about the basis for the human-made ecological concern. Quantum theory, relativ-

³⁴ Donna Haraway. “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,” *Environmental Humanities* 6 (2015): 159 - 165. Web. Aug 10. 2015.

³⁵ Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 2013, 4.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 15.

ity theory, phenomenology, stream of consciousness, among many others, have become examples of the shift of point of view, showing the inconsistency of human as a narrator and measure of all things when things, non-human other, are not clearly knowable.³⁷

Chthulucene, according to Haraway, is not a period which could be marked on a timeline. She also describes it as “Chthulucene, the past, present, to come”³⁸. Chthulucene is a name for “dynamic ongoing sym-chthonic forces and powers of which people are a part, within which ongoingness is at stake. Maybe, but only maybe, and only with intense commitment and collaborative work and play with other terrains, flourishing for rich multispecies assemblages that include people will be possible.”³⁹ Chthulucene even defies the singular timeline, which, in my own

³⁷ Ibid, 10 - 11.

³⁸ Donna Haraway. “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,” 160. After the publication of this article, Haraway has published a longer article concerning the Chthulucene “Staying with the Trouble: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and Chthulucene,” in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene?: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, with Andreas Malm and Jason W. Moore as editors, in July 2016. Later in September 2016, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Haraway’s book on the Chthulucene, has been published. The main idea of the three texts are not much different, and, for this article, I will use the idea in the article I have cited at first.

³⁹ Ibid.

reading, is capitalist because Haraway also argues that, though human beings and other species have participated in constructing the world, it has to be admitted that human beings' world capitalism as well as grand-scale agriculture have lessened spaces and time for beings, both human and non-human, to rehabilitate the ecology.⁴⁰ Chthulucene thus defies the idea of progress and linear timeline, but takes into account all histories, realities, and imaginations in the same frame.

Chthulucene is thus not a period, nor a space, but a collaboration with other species and the mixture of species. It is to be noted here that the word "multispecies assemblages" corresponds to Haraway's idea of "becoming one as becoming with many",⁴¹ which means a species could not live alone, even at the level of the body. A body of one species might include many other species, which stay or use that body as a path to other places. The name Chthulucene was a play on word "Cthulhu", a name of an octopus-like monster in H. P. Lovecraft's sci-fi short story "The Call of Cthulhu", yet Haraway notes that her spelling is different as she uses the Greek root "Chth" which means the earth, in her case. (Chthon could be another name of Gaea or

⁴⁰ Ibid, 159.

⁴¹ Donna J Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 4.

Gaia, Greek goddess of the earth.)⁴² Thus, the period is the period of a monster which has “diverse earth-wide tentacular powers and forces and collected things”.⁴³ Then, Haraway “summons” Naga, Gaia, Pachamama, and so on. These monsters/god thus show their connection with the earth with their “tentacles” and, with these tentacles, defy almost every boundary, both temporal and spatial, as well as dichotomies.⁴⁴ The monsters,

⁴² Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Χθόνιος. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3D%23113957&redirect=true> (Accessed June 16, 2015).

⁴³ Donna Haraway. “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,” 160.

⁴⁴ Gaia and Pachamama, as Mother Earth from Greek and Andean mythology respectively, challenge the spatial dimension by connecting every place together. In terms of temporal boundary, Ulupi, Arjun’s Naga wife from Mahabharata, knows the past, the present, and the future (Vogel, 75). Also, they challenge the dichotomies of death and life, male and female, self and other, by representing themselves as combinations of beings. Spider Woman both creates life as well as takes life. She is also at the centre of all creations, and links them with her web. Pachamama creates Apus, mountain deities, who are parts of her and yet have their own particular, different characteristics (Bolin, 32). Gaia’s husband, Uranus, whom she armed their son to castrate, is named after Gaia’s epithet, Ur-Ana. (Graves, 32) Ulupi’s knowledge about time challenges male-female binary by making her court Arjun, and bring her son and her secret medicine to help injured Arjun in the battlefield, not to mention her phallic serpentine body. (Vogel, 75 - 77).

better than Lovecraft's "misogynist racial-nightmare monster"⁴⁵, could embrace "the webs of speculative fabulation, speculative feminism, science fiction, and scientific fact."⁴⁶ My interpretation is that the acceptance of this mentality or system of thinking will broaden the idea of self and other, and question the stability of one's identity, as the monsters/gods Haraway proposes are almost all in between human and animal, male and female, life and death. When the boundary is blurred, the Chthulucene imagination would lead to understanding about agency of nonhuman entities, and even the concept of agency which is caused by reciprocity, not one-sidedness. Chthulucene imagination will, moreover, show how one's identity is related with other agents, and the transformation of selves and others always occur reciprocally. Lastly, the Chthulucene imagination proposes the reconnection with the earth-bound.

The ongoing combination and reciprocal transformation would lead to, as Haraway proposes, the joined forces of recuperation and rehabilitation of the world, and yet the regeneration would work by also accepting death as Haraway says "[r]enewed generative flourishing cannot grow from myths of immortality or failure to become-with the dead or the extinct." (160 – 161).

⁴⁵ Donna Haraway. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin," 160.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Haraway clearly include the idea of decomposition into her rehabilitational ecological thinking. Though the idea of recuperation means to, eventually, keep on with the progress, but, according to Haraway, death and extinction has to be mourned and considered irreversible. Haraway then calls herself “a compost-ist”⁴⁷ and say that “we”, not only the human animal, “are all composts.”⁴⁸ She does not explicate the term, and yet reiterate that extinction and irreversible destruction of lives are imminent. Then, she considers the moment of making kin with other species syn-chthonically and sym-poetically.⁴⁹ It could be interpreted that the idea of decomposition (which might contain a pun of de-composition, or not composing) is another way of composition, or writing. The process of creating and transforming each other to renew the flourishing earth requires decomposition. Our identities are composts, are remains of the process of reciprocal transformation, and yet still in the process. Yet the word “compost” has the same roots as “composed”⁵⁰, written by

⁴⁷ Ibid, 161.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “Compose - Definition of Compose in English | Oxford Dictionaries,” *Oxford Dictionaries | English*. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/compose> (Accessed October 9, 2015), And “Compost - Definition of Compost in English | Oxford Dictionaries,” *Oxford Dictionaries | English*. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/compost>. (Accessed October 9, 2015).

an author, and both words corresponds with her pun on “sym-po-etically” and “sympoietically” as “sym-poetically” refers to the poetic quality, while “sympoietically” refers to the process of creation or composition. It could be seen that Haraway even considers the process of decomposition as a literary creation, blurring fact and fiction together and recreating new imaginary as well as real identities. The concept of imagination about facts and transformation questions the idea of anthropocentrism, with the human as the centre of knowledge. The compost are not only decomposed mass, but also a composed, or imagined, situation as well. Thus, it could be said that Haraway supports the idea of extinction, decomposition and death as a part of regenerative process, but not the myth of immortality.

With the idea of death and decomposition, Haraway even proposes her motto for the Chthulucene: “Making kin, not babies,”⁵¹ which might highlight the extinction of the human race. This could be read as opposed to heteronormative patriarchal capitalist system, as the motto proposes not to make babies, which could supply the labour market and consumers in this Anthropocene/Capitalocene. It should be noted as well that the monsters Haraway has summoned could be seen as the monstrous

⁵¹ Donna Haraway. “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,” 161.

feminine⁵², the monstrous women which defies patriarchy, such as Gaia, who tells Chronos, her son, to castrate Uranus, his father; Medusa, whose phallic symbols appear in her hair. Moreover, Haraway directly urges feminists “to unravel the ties of both genealogy and kin, and kin and species”⁵³ as she argues that present-day feminists has unravelled a great number of “supposed natural necessity of ties” between, for example, “sex and gender, race and sex, race and nation” [.]⁵⁴ Her idea of making kin means to make connection with “something other/more than entities tied by genealogy or ancestry.”⁵⁵ She also argues that kin does not need to be human and she maintains that “all earthlings are kins in the deepest sense”.⁵⁶ She sees this connection, or making kin, as revealing to the unfamiliarity and uncanniness in kins. The word “uncanny” shows her Freudian influence of “the uncanny” which mean “the species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar” (Freud, 2003: 124). Kin for Haraway consequently becomes something well-known but suppressed, and the return of it is

⁵² The term is coined by Barbara Creed, See “Introduction,” Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1993), 1 - 7.

⁵³ Donna Haraway. “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,” 161.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 162.

frightening. This could be referred back to the suppressed monster/god and its resurfacing. To summarise, it could be seen that, in terms of Chthulucene imagination, the concept of family, or marriage, is questioned. It thus could be argued that this Chthulucene imagination includes a feminist, or even queer stance, along with its concept of ecological cohabitation.

Haraway also discusses her idea about kin and kind, which is directly related to the idea of cohabitation and interconnect-edness. Haraway narrates her experience with these two words in Shakespeare Class about the pun concerning kin and kind. She does not reveal which text, but it could be inferred that the text was *Hamlet*, with the phrase “more than kin and less than kind”⁵⁷. Hamlet said this phrase to Claudius, his uncle who marries his mother, so as to explain his relationship with Claudius after Claudius calls him “cousin”. G. R. Hibbard explained this phrase that kin could mean cousin, while kind refers to family member. “more than kin and less than kind”, according to Hibbard, could mean “more than your cousin, but less than your family member”⁵⁸ since Claudius has married his mother, Gertrude, and replaced the position of his father. As Hamlet does not accept Claudius’ title as King and the replacement of

⁵⁷ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: The Oxford Shakespeare*. Edited by G. R. Hibbard. Reissue edition (Oxford England: OUP Oxford, 2008), 158.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

his dead father, Hamlet plays on the pun of “kind” as sort or category and generous. Hibbard argues that Hamlet meant to say that he is more than a cousin now, and yet he couldn’t be kind enough for him/ couldn’t be his kind. Haraway then argues that being a member of your family does not mean one is kind to you, and what does not belong to your familiar kinship could actually belong to your own kind. The uncanniness for some particular beings is thus originated from the repression of the desire to lessen boundary between self and other. The connection of this familiar, and yet unfamiliar, (with Haraway’s pun on familiar and family) shows how human beings cannot evade the haunting kinship and ancestry by separating themselves from nonhuman entities.

Donna Haraway’s Chthulucene imagination could be seen as a space which combines and invites feminist/queer criticism as well as Freudian psychoanalytical concept of “The Uncanny”. Thus, this reading of *The Lair of the White Worm* will also include those two theoretical approaches as well.

Overall, the idea of Chthulucene could be used certainly with *The Lair of the White Worm* by Bram Stoker, which opposes almost every aspect of the Chthulucene. In the novel, the obsession with timeline and the necessary continuation of race suggests human domination and eradication of other haunting species, while Chthulucene urges us to “make kin, not babies.”

The dinosaur woman thus suggests the monstrous feminine and could join the troops of the Chthulucene monsters; nevertheless, it is blown up to smithereens, except the white bed of china clay, which affirms human domination in the form of capital and plantation (in the period of capitalocene and plantationocene). The decomposition of the carcasses of the worm and Lady Arabella March could be seen as a new, and yet uncanny, beginning for the nonhuman as Adam and Mimi's marriage could be for the human.

4. Textual Analysis

This part of this article will be divided into two main parts, discussing the New Woman and the dinosaur concerning degeneration and extinction respectively. This analysis would reveal and deconstruct the villainisation of the signs of degeneration of the British race, showing how, without scapegoating and eliminating New Woman and the dinosaur, the characters could bring themselves to the verge of extinction, and showing that degeneration and decomposition is also a part of progress as well as the past, defying the capitalist single temporal line. The analysis will show how biased the “human” protagonist, Adam Salton, considers every other subhuman characters, though he could be seen as less than human as well.

It is clear that the problem of motherhood and marriage stands at the centre of the anxiety about decadence and extinction of the British race in the nineteenth century; *The Lair of the White Worm* by Bram Stoker has also placed its main figure, Lady Arabella March, as a mercenary, unmarriageable, unmotherly temptress, who looks like “a soulless, pitiless being, not human [.]”⁵⁹ as opposed to a strong, protective, and motherly woman like Mimi Watford. However, the novel could be read as suggesting that family does not have to be based on marriage, supporting Haraway’s idea of making kin, and even shows violence in heteronormative marriage and family. Thus, the novel suggests the anthropocentric bias to select a particular “kin” rather than accepting all kin. This part of the analysis will show the agency and materiality of the female “criminal” which challenges male-dominated concept of family, as well as the possibility of cultural construction of families, women are not merely goddesses, while family are both natural and biological. The novel, with the influence of the degeneration anxiety, condemns Lady Arabella March because she marries a rich man for his money as well as she is a “pitiless”⁶⁰ killer because Lady Arabella exposes the myth about becoming a woman, a rudiment of civilisation, in Victorian period and insists that she has agency in

⁵⁹ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 1998. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1188>, 67.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 67.

male-dominated society of the Victorians. She even exposes the materiality of the female body, challenging the closeted Victorian sexual code of conduct. The representation as an unkind killer could be viewed as reflecting the villainisation by the male protagonists, who, secretly, supports her crime and commit crimes themselves. The unmarriageability of Lady Arabella has thus exposed the confusing marriage of Mimi as well. This confusing marriage reveals the desperate desire to restore the male-dominated society and reinstates the self-contradictory idea in the novel that family, or kinship, could also be based on something other than heteronormative marriage.

It is very important to see how the characterisation of Lady Arabella is similar to New Woman, or the representation of New Woman in the period, as it is the New Woman who challenged the Victorian concept of marriage, the base of male-dominated British civilisation. Lady Arabella might not be considered a New Woman as the suffragists and early feminists defined, because she is represented as financially dependent on men and has no other desire but marriage. Yet, for other, especially male, authors in the period, she seems to correspond to the “New Woman” character they constructed. It is obvious that Lady Arabella March does not support the rights of women or even promote it, but she is compared to a suffragette in the text as Sir Nathaniel says, “This one is a woman, with all a woman’s wisdom and wit, combined with the heartlessness of a cocotte and the want of

principle of a suffragette".⁶¹ This is the only place the novel refers to Lady Arabella as a New Woman, and yet she corresponds to the contemporary representation of the New Woman. She is an "oversexed vamp"⁶² like many other characters such as Lucy Westenra from *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, and Sybil Eton in *The Sorrows of Satan* by Marie Corelli.⁶³ It is obvious in the novel how we could see Lady Arabella positions her body to achieve her result, for example, when she chooses to sit beside Edgar Caswall at his homecoming party, or when she enters Castra Regis alone to meet Edgar Caswall. Especially, as David Seed argues, she also lures and seduces Adam Salton through a series of many different doors, "taking him deeper and deeper into the interior culminating in the basement well-hole."⁶⁴ If the well could be seen as a symbol of a vagina, it is thus very clear that the action of luring is intensely sexual. The seduction and her beauty are not futile, as Adam admits that, he wants "to flirt a little with her" (129).⁶⁵

⁶¹ Ibid, 142.

⁶² Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, eds. *The Fin De Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, C. 1880 - 1900*, 75.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ David Seed, "Eruptions of the Primitive into the Present: The Jewel of Seven Stars and The Lair of the White Worm," in Hughes, William, and Andrew Smith, eds. *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic*, 201.

⁶⁵ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 1998, 129.

If the well-hole symbolises the vagina, the journey into it is the journey of acknowledgement of the female sexual desire and the reality of the genitals which gives birth. The snake inside the orifice could signify the phallus, which could be linked with the representation of the New Woman as mannish, or could be seen as a sign of disease which turns a courtesan's genitals into phallic shape, according to the contemporary criminal anthropologist, Cesare Lombroso.⁶⁶ If the New Woman were campaigning for marriage which a woman also has her agency to choose her own husband, the anxiety about women becoming men, who were able to make decision and choice about marriage, could be represented by the phallic dinosaurian snake hidden in the well hole of the unmarriageable woman. While the sexual dimension of Mimi Watford is unknown, the great vaginal symbol was shown in the house of Lady Arabella, who does not show any signs of repulse towards her own vaginal hole. Lady Arabella even enjoys using a Kelvin sounding apparatus with the hole to measure how deep it is. The idea of enjoyment to learn and know her vaginal well, which could be seen as masturbation as well, challenges the concept of female identity and sexuality by showing its physicality and vitality, reasserting the female char-

⁶⁶ "Tropical Ovaries: Gynaecological Degeneration and Lady Arabella's "Female Difficulites," in Bram Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm*" in Piya Pal-Lapinski, *The Exotic Woman in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction and Culture: A Reconsideration*, 81.

acter with flesh and blood, not the mere machine who always accept marriage without making her choices. It is clearly seen that the campaign for change in marriage causes great anxiety to the Victorian male-dominated society as the representation of women who plan marriage for herself becomes monstrous beauty, with an unhealthy, diseased, or even syphilitic womb hidden under her attractive appearance. This is what Pal-Lapinski proposes as “morbid wombs” or “tropical ovaries”⁶⁷. Pal-Lapinski even compares this well-hole to the description of female genitals in Cesare Lombroso’s book, *Female Offender*. The book asserts mannishness in prostitutes and female criminal.⁶⁸ This novel, of course, shows a vaginal hole containing a huge serpentine phallus inside a manor called “Diana’s Grove”. The name Diana obviously suggests the goddess of the moon, who is cold to men and remains a virgin. Another reading of the serpentine phallus could be that the phallus represents the autonomy which Victorian men had and for which Victorian women desired. Desire for autonomy and agency is thus represented as the transition from women to men, from vagina to phallus. The snake in the well hole could also be seen as a queer sexual organ, or a hermaphroditic organ. Lady Arabella becomes the in-between sex. The moveable snake emphasises her unstable sexual identity. Moreover, the vaginal orifice is not only a normal, birth-giv-

⁶⁷ Ibid, 74, 76.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 82.

ing, one but one that brings forth death, thus challenges the idea of motherhood as well as patriarchy. The well-hole becomes vagina dentata, or toothed vagina, which swallows, not gives birth. Oolanga, who attempts to court Lady Arabella, is pushed into the well. The smell which asserts its existence also reminds Adam Salton of death and infirmity. He describes the smell:

It was like nothing that Adam had ever met with. He compared it with all the noxious experiences he had ever had – the drainage of war hospitals, of slaughterhouses, the refuse of dissecting rooms. None of these was like it, though it had something of them all, with, added, the sourness of chemical waste and the poisonous effluvium of the bilge of a water-logged ship whereon a multitude of rats had been drowned. However, he was content not to go any further in a search for analogy [...]⁶⁹

Adam Salton's imagery signifies death, malady, and decomposition, obvious signs for degeneration. The imagery is also related to body and emphasises the corporeality of the female sex. It could also be interpreted that the smell attacks him and defies categorisation. The phenomenon of the stench of the well hole is even uncanny, to use Freudian term, as Adam says that

⁶⁹ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 1998, 120.

the stench could be compared to putrefaction and bodily waste, yet “[n]one of these was like it, though it had something of them all.” The smell could be interpreted as unfamiliar and yet familiar. This uncanniness thus means the smell could be referred to the return of something repressed. In this case, it is possible that the female autonomy over her sexuality, the female genital, and also the fear of them, were repressed in the male-dominated Victorian society.

As the vaginal orifice in her house signifies death and challenges patriarchy, it could be said that Lady Arabella is represented as a killer, an opposite of the birth-giving mother. Lady Arabella thus corresponds with a figure called New Woman Criminal, named by Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, a present-day feminist critic.⁷⁰ New Woman Criminal is a fictional character, who defies criminal categorisation in the period⁷¹ with her beauty and wiles. This figure appears in literature out of anxiety about the new feminised urban space after the Great Exhibition in 1851, which means the growth of department stores, tea shops, and lounges. Women were liberated from the domestic space

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, *Framed: The New Woman Criminal in British Culture at the Fin De Siecle* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 3 - 5.

⁷¹ In the late nineteenth century, Cesare Lombroso, Italian anthropologist, proposed the science of criminal anthropology, which helped identify criminals by animalistic physical appearance. (Otis,...)

and trapped under the beauty myth in advertisements.⁷² The anxiety in the late nineteenth century, when the urban space was heavily feminised, was that, not to mention the suffragette and the New Woman, women would change from “ethic”, a domestic angel, to an “image,” a mere beauty.⁷³ Lady Arabella’s attractiveness as well as murderousness could make her one of them. Miller argues that New Woman criminal appears in three genres of detective fictions: the detective series, the crime film, and the “dynamite narrative”.⁷⁴

The last genre, the “dynamite narrative,” seems to explain *The Lair* best, yet *The Lair* is the reverse of “the dynamite narrative”. Dominant dynamite narratives suggests male failure in the feminised urban space, while *The Lair* tells a story of successful detonation in a country by a strongly masculine character. This difference emphasises the male desire to regain power in the “decadent” world of women challenging male authority, and reveals male anxiety about their degeneration and extinction. Actually, there are a great number of dynamite narratives in the late nineteenth century. Miller gives definition of this genre as a novel that “treats the characteristically modern topic of political terror” and “doesn’t always include literal dynamite – the

⁷² Ibid, 11.

⁷³ Ibid, 12.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 149.

mode of terror may be an explosion, an assassination, or some other threat to the social order – but always depicts a politically motivated criminal plot”.⁷⁵ Miller then focuses on the comparison of Henry James’ *Princess Casamassima* and Joseph Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*, “the two most canonical representations”⁷⁶ of terrorist bombings in London. Miller notes the similarity of the two novels: the failed terrorist attempt to destroy the feminised consumerist society by feminised male character, and considers how both novels show masculine anxiety towards the decadent feminised world.⁷⁷ *The Lair of the White Worm* is the exact opposite. Adam’s masculinity, especially his sexual desire, is more than obvious. Adam’s desire was commented by Sir Nathaniel de Salis: “I couldn’t help noticing the way that even you looked as if you wished to absorb her!”⁷⁸ His ecstasy for marrying Mimi is conspicuous, and he wanted it to be so: “I want no secret, sir, except for Mimi’s good. For myself, I should like to go and shout it out on the house-tops!”⁷⁹ Adam’s overly masculine characteristics highlights the lack or the desire for patriarchal order in the period rife with fear of extinction and degeneration, similar to anxiety in the dynamite narrative. The name “Adam” clearly

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 150.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 149 - 150.

⁷⁸ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 1998, 33.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 144.

suggests that as his name was the name of the first man of the God-created world, according to the Bible. Adam's successful dynamite explosion was to reset the order of this animalistic/gender-confusing space and the success suggests the dire need of human, patriarchal order.

In terms of laws, the late nineteenth-century England was a period which the laws gave rights to women and challenged male power in domestic space. In order to restore patriarchal order from the verge of extinction, the novel, accordingly, criminalises a character similar to the New Woman character like Lady Arabella. Though Lady Arabella can be seen as a criminal who threatens procreation in patriarchal order with her consuming womb, Adam's illegal act of killing is justified to restore male domination. Miller notes that the legal intervention in the late nineteenth-century Britain also blurred the boundary between the public and the private, decreasing the sanctity of the father in the domestic space. The Matrimonial Causes Act 1878 "allowed abused women to separate from their husbands more easily."⁸⁰ The Married Women's Property Acts in the 1870s and the 1880s gave women financial liberty and rights. The legal change in the late nineteenth century obviously electrified Victorian patriarchy, and thus it could be interpreted that this is the

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, *Framed: The New Woman Criminal in British Culture at the Fin De Siecle*, 12.

reason why the New Woman Criminal is a slippery figure who threatens Victorian patriarchal society. As for *The Lair of the White Worm*, the legal dimension was also added to the novel with a misogynistic and Eurocentric bias. The crimes committed by Lady Arabella March, killing the mongooses and Oolanga the African, are highlighted and put into ethical and moral questions by Sir Nathaniel de Salis. However, Adam was not condemned, though they find the eradication of the Worm concerned with legal matter. Concerning Oolanga, Adam has made a racist remark about him, saying, and “Whoever kills him when the time comes will not have to fear punishment, but to expect praise.”⁸¹ Adam considers Oolanga expendable, and yet when the Oolanga is thrown into the murderous well by Lady Arabella, Adam is shocked by the act. When Lady Arabella explains what has happened as an accident in her letter, both Adam and Sir Nathaniel de Salis sees the letter as a lie and condemns her cruelty. When it comes to the extermination of the White Worm, Sir Nathaniel is in deep thought: “There were all sorts of legal cruxes to be thought out, not only regarding the taking of life, even of a monstrosity in human form, but also of property”.⁸² However, the novel skips the result of his reflection about legal matter to Adam’s determined face, showing his insistence on killing the worm, and, certainly, Lady Arabella. Ironically,

⁸¹ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 1998, 48.

⁸² Ibid, 139.

before Adam brings sand over to fill in the well hole after his purchase of Diana's Grove, he tells Sir Nathaniel, his mentor, that sea sand was used to protect the building of the Bank of England from fire in the time of the fear of Chartist attack.⁸³ Adam Salton, who is going to explode the large ancient orifice, unknowingly compares himself with, and thus reveals himself as, a criminal. When Sir Nathaniel reminds him of the danger the bomb is going to cause, saying, "... it may wreck the whole neighbourhood",⁸⁴ Adam talks back to him, saying "And free it forever from a monster."⁸⁵ Adam's special legal and moral exception, which justifies his killing, reflects anxiety in degenerative patriarchal world, which can even resort to crime to regain male power.

The Lair of the White Worm does not only eradicate the New Woman criminal like Lady Arabella who threatens patriarchal order by revealing degeneration, but also reaffirms the heteronormative marriage institution in order to continue male sovereignty. However, to confirm the construction of heteronormative family, the novel becomes self-contradictory by revealing that male-dominated heteronormative order comes from male homosocial/homoerotic bond. Adam's supportive relationship

⁸³ Ibid, 178.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 179.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

with his uncle and his uncle's friend leads to the destruction of the phallic Lady Arabella, who disturbs male-dominated sphere. The self-contradiction leads to another irony: homoeroticism also leads to extinction, which male characters fear.

The male homosocial/ homoerotic bond in the novel could be considered very important for the novel as the plan for the eradication of the White Worm comes out of it. Though Richard Salton's request for Adam to return reflects the desire to normalise his family by seeking to continue his family line, the return of Adam denotes the decline of his family as well as Richard Salton's barrenness, or doubtful sexuality. The comic camaraderie and immediate connection springs serendipitously when Richard meets Adam for the first time. Adam said, "I think I knew you the moment I set eyes on you. I am glad that that dream was only enhanced by the reality!"⁸⁶ The speech could be seen as similar to a scene in heterosexual romance novels. The immediate connection, which is similar to the spark of love and almost biologically determined, justifies the novel's desire to maintain the family line of the Salton. If Adam Salton could be justifiably added as a part of Richard Salton's family, heterosexual marriage is not necessary. The word "dream" also suggests both anxiety about patriarchal degeneration and homoerotic fantasy. This love is thus tinged with male homoeroticism/ homosociality as well,

⁸⁶ Ibid, 5.

and with this homosociality and familial fantasy, their family could be established. Although these family members are quite close, Richard Salton, Adam Salton, and Sir Nathaniel de Salis try to deny the homoerotic or feminising possibility. At the scene when Sir Nathaniel later sees Adam as though he were Richard Salton's son⁸⁷, and Adam Salton is happy with that naming, The narrator says, "All the men felt touched, but, with the usual avoidance of Englishmen of emotional subjects personal to themselves ..."⁸⁸ The scene of avoidance could be seen as the avoidance of feminisation or homoerotic love. It also shows that family is also culturally constructed as well as biological since the closeness could make the relationship among kin similar to that of conventional Victorian family, with father, mother, and their child. Moreover, the concept of kinship is also emphasised; Adam Satlon even shows preference for kinship over family, saying, "you are my uncle and the nearest thing to me on earth – of my own kin, and, moreover, you couldn't have been more kind to me or made me more welcome if you had been my own father."⁸⁹ The idea corresponds well with Haraway's description of kinship and Hamlet, of which the plot is mainly concerned with bitter relationship with an avuncular figure. The words "kin" and "kind" in the quote above are on the same level of meaning;

⁸⁷ Ibid, 12.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 39.

being kin means being kind. It could be said that the distant relatives could better be imagined as close than the parents, and this idea reveals how homoeroticism/ homosociality again could construct a family as well as heterosexuality. The kin, which suggests almost no blood relations, could be kinder than the one from biological family. This idea actually supports every kind of family, and yet, in the end, the novel suggests that heterosexual marriage and family must be established. This irony could be seen as the desperate attempt to restore male power, and thus male homosocial family could be accepted, on condition that feminisation is to be avoided and Adam, the male protagonist, must show himself as obviously heterosexual so as to settle the heterosexual marriage and restore male domination.

Female homosocial relationship could be clearly seen as well, with Mimi and Lilla Watford, and yet it is destroyed by the assertion of heteronormative marriage institution to continue male power. However, the origin of love and marriage between Adam Salton and Mimi Watford is unclear. It is clear that the female bonding between Mimi Watford and Lilla Watford helps Lilla survive the hypnotic battle of Edgar Caswall, with the help of Oolanga and Lady Arabella. When Mimi is threatened by Lady Arabella, Adam Salton decides to protect her with marriage. The marriage takes Mimi away from Lilla, and, in the end, causes Lilla's death. This marriage could be well justified by Adam, who both desires Mimi and wants to protect her from danger.

Nonetheless, for Mimi, the love springs out of their relationship very confusingly and serendipitously. “Mimi could not for a long time think at all or recollect anything, except that Adam loved her and was saving her from a terrible danger. In that bitter time itself, whilst she was learning those truths she found her own heart.”⁹⁰ Mimi has not shown her love for Adam before this part of the novel. Out of this plan for protection, Mimi is separated from Lilla, who later dies without her cousin’s help. The novel might support the establishment of marriage, and yet the death of Lilla could remind us that, interestingly, heterosexual marriage in this novel results in death and evil. Lady Arabella March’s marriage to Captain March ends with the mysterious suicide of the Captain. Lady Arabella March’s plan to marry Edgar Caswall could also be considered mercenary as well as supportive of his unkindness. Though this heteronormative marriage of Adam and Mimi suggests protection and love, the idea of protection by marriage thus undermines female autonomy and supports male authority. The image of protective male, similar to a religious idol in the house, was seen as outdated by one of the New Woman activist, Ella Hepworth Dixon, who supports female decision for her own marriage as well as the idea that the married couples should treat each other as companions.⁹¹ Thus, the heteronor-

⁹⁰ Ibid, 147.

⁹¹ Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, eds. *The Fin De Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, C. 1880-1900*, 88.

mative marriage of Adam and Mimi restores sexual order as well as reaffirm the patriarchal power, though the novel proposes possibilities of homosocial/ homoerotic family with the Saltons and Sir Nathaniel as well as Mimi and Lilla.

It is notable that the concept of kinship is eliminated as well as the worm. To refer to Haraway's idea of making kin, Haraway reveals that as the idea of kinship is repressed, kin could be haunting and uncanny. Thus, both the homoerotic kinship and gender-confusing Lady Arabella are eliminated. In terms of gender and kinship, Victorian male-dominated world suppressed male and female homoeroticism so as to correspond with its capitalist system, which needs labour in the market. Homoeroticism in the novel and gender-confusing Lady Arabella are thus avoided and killed off to establish heteronormative capitalist order. Yet, Haraway also insists that kin do not have to be only human beings, but also nonhuman entities as she argues that all earthlings are kin in the deepest sense.⁹² Haraway urges us to make kin in the time of The Anthropocene and the Capitalocene as anthropocentrism and capitalism suppress the kinship with nonhuman identity. The elimination of The White Worm could also be seen as a part of the Anthropocene as the White Worm, a Chthulucene kin, challenges the capitalist linear timeline, with

⁹² Donna Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin," 162.

its long body metaphorically covers “the past, present, and to come,”⁹³ and questions human domination. The White Worm’s gruesome death, which reveals the process of degeneration and putrefaction, shows a mass of kinship and assemblages of organic and non-organic matter. Many “human” characters, mainly Adam Salton and Sir Nathaniel, repress this kinship and assemblages with anthropocentric narratives so as to continue human ascendancy and reaffirm the boundary between the human and the nonhuman.

Sir Nathaniel de Salis and Adam Salton exploit archaeological and paleontological discourses to strengthen human identity, and yet the novel reveals the discourses, which usually represent themselves as objective truth, are similar to fictions, written only to support human identity. This corresponds to Haraway’s idea of “compost”/ “composed”. She argues that identities, either biological or socially constructed, are composed, like fiction, and the homophones of “composed”, which is “compost”, suggests “decomposition”, which could also mean “not composing” (de-composition) as well. These homophones reflect that identities are neither stable, nor fixed, but are in the making, as it is alternately written (composed) and deconstructed (de-composed). De-composition and composition thus suggest deconstruction of identities as well as fictionality of truth and

⁹³ Ibid, 160.

knowledge about selves. Human identities are composed and de-composed, but not biologically fixed and stable. Fictionality, or composition, is very important for Haraway for she argues that it matters which stories tell stories, and which concept thinks concept.⁹⁴ Haraway's ideas of stories behind stories could be interpreted that human beings cannot escape narrative framework in order to know and understand something, and yet what matters for Haraway is the choice of stories and concepts which produce another sets of stories and concepts. The "stories" about the Worm and history of the region, told by Sir Nathaniel, are obviously constructed on the basis of anthropocentrism, The novel's revelation of fictionality of archaeological and paleontological fact is clearly stated by Sir Nathaniel de Salis, the archaeologist, "[y]ou may think, Adam, that all this is imagination on my part, especially as I have never seen any belonging to the generation I have spoken of. So it is. But imagination based on deep study."⁹⁵ He reinstates this idea by calling his historical recounting "installment."⁹⁶ It is obvious that Sir Nathaniel's archaeological facts, similar to fiction, are made up on the basis of imagination and lead to the anthropocentric violence in the end. Palaeontology, a science quite similar to history and archaeology, is also a mixture of narrative and evidence. Sir Nathaniel's

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 1998, 15.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 20.

explanation about dinosaurs has to rely on literature; the imagery of dragon is used frequently. The notable phrase is when Sir Nathaniel quotes “when dragons of the prime tore each other in their slime.”⁹⁷ The phrase is an allusion to *In Memoriam* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Dragons of the prime,/ That tare each other in their slime (LVI, 22 – 23).⁹⁸ History, archaeology, and especially palaeontology reside in the twilight zone of empirical reality and interpretation. The emphasis on its fictionality challenges objectivity of science and reveals anthropocentrism behind the “facts”.

The novel can also be viewed as challenging anthropocentrism at the linguistic level and emphasises man-made violence by claiming knowledge, that is, at the process of symbolisation. The process of symbolisation reflects human desire to be the author, the composer, of this complex animalistic battle by determining qualities for each animal, in order to prolong and reaffirm human ascendancy. This corresponds the idea in the animal protection movement in 1830s which associated human beings with “humaneness”. However, if human beings should be considered humane and animal-loving, the end of the novel, with volcanic eruption of carcasses from man-made violence,

⁹⁷ Ibid, 132.

⁹⁸ “In Memoriam,” in Tennyson, Alfred Lord, *The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 237, LVI: 22 - 23.

suggests otherwise. It shows that human beings only protect the species that will not challenge them. This anthropocentric logic appears in the novel by fixing bird, hawk, and serpent as peace-loving, tyrannical, and villainous respectively, with narratives as support. Mimi Watford becomes the peace-loving bird with the support of Sir Nathaniel de Salis's narrative about the kingdom of Mercia. Sir Nathaniel de Salis tells us that the area around Mercy farm is called "Mercy" out of linguistic corruption of the name of Kingdom Mercia, yet it was later called in early manuscripts *Vilula Misericordia*⁹⁹ (18). The pun and corruption of Mercia and Mercy makes the name of the place in early Latin manuscript mean truly the place of mercy. (*Misericordia* means mercy.)¹⁰⁰ This explanation results in the reading of Mimi as peace-loving and merciful incarnation of birds, a symbol of the nuns at Mercy. It is to be reminded that this interpretation, or this narrative, could be seen as the Biblical positioning of characters, which gives biased moral quality to each species. Mimi Watford of Mercy Farm has birds, originally doves, as the symbol of her area, and dove is also the symbol of the Holy Spirit. With this fixed presumption about animals, Edgar Caswall thus becomes the hawk-like tyrannical character, while Lady Arabella

⁹⁹ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 1998, 18.

¹⁰⁰ "Latin Definitions for: *Misericordia* (Latin Search) - Latin Dictionary and Grammar Resources - Latdict." <http://latin-dictionary.net/search/latin/misericordia> (Accessed December 3, 2015).

becomes the wily serpentine woman, representing evil like in Genesis. However, The White Worm challenges this pairing of animals and qualities as “worm” in this novel has more than one fixed meaning. Yet, for this word, the meaning is fixed by Sir Nathaniel’s explanation by finally concluding that “worm” in the White Worm means “a veritable dragon or serpent.”¹⁰¹ The attempt to fix meaning reveals the loss of human power to control meaning about the animal other as its name refers to more species than one. The White Worm, a member of Chtulucene throng, could be seen as assemblages of language and biology, worm and snake, organism and its environment (Its whiteness comes from the clay where it resides.). Thus, linguistically, the White Worm has to be fixed.

This symbolisation finally leads to the villainisation of Edgar Caswall and Lady Arabella, and the justification of Adam Salton’s plan to eradicate the worm, with Sir Nathaniel’s explanation of the battle as the battle between good and evil. Though Sir Nathaniel at first tries not to moralise the different physiques and even sees the term “good and evil” too broad to be used with every being and their relation with one another, saying, “we must remember that “good” and “evil” are terms so wide as to take in the whole scheme of creation and all that is implied by them and

¹⁰¹ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 35.

by their mutual action and reaction.”¹⁰² This corresponds very well with the concept of Chtulucene as Sir Nathaniel accepts the mutual reaction and transformation of beings, which are in flux and could not be easily described with the word “good” or “evil”. His speech undermines human power by showing that the idea of morality is inapplicable with the natural world, or even the human world. However, ironically, he supported the killing of the White Worm in the end. It could be argued that the White Worm should be killed out of necessity, not morality, yet killing is unethical and illegal and Sir Nathaniel knows that well.

This anthropocentric logic and irony could be seen mainly in the “humane” movement for animal protection in the 1830s; the movement considered sympathy for animals a mark for the human and the civilized, and thus the novel, correspondingly, villainises predatory Edgar Caswall and Lady Arabella March and justifies the killing of evil, uncivilised beings. However, the movement overlooked several types of hunting; similarly, the novel justifies the killing of the worm and overlooks the idea that the worm is among many other kin. The association of humaneness with human beings could be seen when the movement consider people committing cruelty against animals foreign. (Ritvo 130) As the movement is concerned mainly with the improvement of human morality in England, it could be seen

¹⁰² Ibid, 54.

that the movement is connected with the idea of being civilised as well. The cruelty against animals could also be seen as an act of savagery. There is no clear revision of human and animal relationship within its movement. Some of the members in the movement still enjoyed fox hunting and grouse shooting, providing their reasons that the animals were artful by nature (and did not get caught easily) and the hunt helped make balance in nature.¹⁰³ This irony could go well with *The Lair of the White Worm*. The novel reveals cruelty of foreign, and/or animalistic characters like Edgar Caswall, Oolanga, and Lady Arabella, with their cruelty against animals, and yet the protagonist proposes to devastate the habitat of great dinosaurian worm in order to protect people and “tame” animals like doves. The narrator evidently critiques cruelty against animals and insists upon the kindness of the “human” characters: Mr Watford, Mr Salton, and Sir Nathaniel are all concerned in the issue, partly from kindness of heart – for none of them could see suffering, even of wild birds, unmoved – and partly on account of their property, which had to be protected [...]¹⁰⁴ The kindness mentioned here could be linked with the end of the novel, after the volcanic eruption caused by dynamite has stopped, both Adam Salton and Sir Nathaniel intend not to stay close to the carcasses. It

¹⁰³ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*, 133 - 134.

¹⁰⁴ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 1998, 74.

could be seen that they might be aware of their own violence. It should be noted here that the kindness of heart is not the only reason of their anxiety, but the anxiety about losing their own property is included. The idea of protection supports the logic of human-dominated capitalist world, that is, human beings are the only ruling species among others on earth. Humans, according to the novel, are both protectors of threatened animals and killers of animals which threaten other animals as well as challenge their authority.

Thus, the humane movement opened a space for human activities which causes violence to the environment as long as the activities do not challenge human identity and still let humans stay at the centre among other beings, allowing them to become the only species who could explain and control. For this novel, the snakes are to be killed; the birds are to be protected. The villains of the novel do the opposite. Sir Nathaniel De Salis finds Adam's snake-killing acceptable because he considers them vermin.¹⁰⁵ The word "vermin" could suggest punishment without evidence, or evil nature without proof. Vermin are something to be gotten rid of, even though we cannot be sure. It should be noted that "vermin" comes from Latin word which means "worm" as well. Snakes, or worms, should be eradicated because they could cause mess or danger. The eradication is thus necessary for

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 38.

human and is nothing which contradicts with his kindness for some animals, which need protection, or, in other words, could show that humans are the greater and more powerful beings who have the mission to protect.

Yet, the novel shows how the anthropocentric system of explanation fails and also the failure of controlling nonhuman animal or even to separate human animals from nonhuman animals. Edgar Caswall's human method of frightening the birds eventually had disheartened human beings as well. It should be noted here that the method of flying a huge hawk kite comes from agricultural section: Chinese farmers. Agriculture could be seen as a combination of nature and culture; yet, as Haraway shows the parallel ideas with the Anthropocene, Plantationocene, or the era of plantation, causes large-scale change in the environment for both human and nonhuman entities, highlights human power, and causes a great number of irreversible losses. Plantation in the age of the British Empire altered native method of agriculture to a modern, industrial, and anthropocentric one, which leads to oppression as well as great change and losses in the ecosystem.¹⁰⁶ However, the novel shows failure of an agricultural technique of dispelling birds with a hawk kite, which, instead of highlighting the human power over nonhuman world,

¹⁰⁶ See, "Introduction," in William Beinart, *Environment And Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1 - 21.

reveals that human beings are also enmeshed within the world of ongoing transformation. The large kite, instead of showing human power, reveals the interconnection of human and animal because the hawk kite also affects human beings as well as animals. When the kite dispels birds and causes solitude in the country, denizens in the country could not tolerate this silence and become depressed. Moreover, the idea of categorising animals as well as narrativising them could be seen as challenged by this bird episode. The episode shows that nature is not stationary and fixed by balance, but is always in motion and ongoing transformation. The kite reveals the interconnection between human and the nonhuman. Also, the novel almost always relies on a pattern of animalistic battles, with “human beings” as spectators and, eventually, intervener. However, nature is not a game, and it has no end. The bird episode seems to end with the victory of Mimi, yet the birds, which comes at Mimi’s call, do not return and become pest animals. The control by Edgar Caswall, also relies on the concept of natural opposition. The image of a large hawk, a “natural” predator, is flown in the air to ward off the birds. The kite is effective, and yet its effectiveness affects human beings as well. It shows how a natural phenomenon connects with the cultural one and does not end easily and systematically. The episode represents the natural-cultural world with ongoing transformation and multitude of agents, which are not only human beings. Yet, this network of interconnectedness challeng-

es human individuality as it reveals indestructible kinship, or bonding, with nonhuman entities and renders the boundary between the human and the nonhuman impossible. As degeneration anxiety leads to the prevention of pure human identity from its extinction, the revelation of interconnectedness as well as the failure of anthropocentric reading of the nonhuman leads to the desperate plan to affirm the power of human beings once and for all by destroying the White Worm, the most complex assemblages of beings in the novel which threatens human authority.

The White Worm represents the complexity of Chthulucene world the best. It is unknowable to human beings, and challenges the human capitalist regime with its assemblage qualities: the inseparable combination of the earth and the snake body, with the name of the worm, which also symbolises degeneration. Moreover the boundary of the human and the nonhuman is blurred with Lady Arabella March, the imagined transformation of the White Worm. This puzzles Mimi as she said, after she survived Lady Arabella's murderous attempt,

Just fancy how any stranger – say a doctor – would regard her if she were to calmly tell him that she had been to a tea-party with an antediluvian monster, and that they had been waited on by up-to-date men-servants. From this she went into all sorts of wild fancies. What sort of tea did dragons prefer? What was it that essentially tickled their palates? Who did the washing for the dragons ‘servants? Did they use starch? If, in privacy of their houses – homes – lairs, dragons were accustomed to use knives and forks and teaspoons? Yes, that at any rate was true: she had seen them used herself.¹⁰⁷

This bewilderment disturbs Mimi Watford so much that she even considers the existence of the White Worm impossible.¹⁰⁸ Confusion in this quotation reveals the anthropocentric separation of human and nonhuman world at its extreme; even the terms for Lady Arabella’s residence are used undecidedly, doubtful whether it should be human’s or animal’s. Even the normal household objects and people puzzle her. Lady Arabella March’s manor could signify the dynamic struggle of the realm of culture and nature, or, rather, the cohabitation of both, with a room for the cultured afternoon tea, and the other room as the residence

¹⁰⁷ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 1998, 171 - 172.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 171.

of the animal, awaiting for its prey inside the well-hole. It could be seen that people in the room of culture could fall into the well-hole of the animal very easily; the boundary between the human and the animal is thus blurred and challenged. This scene corresponds the concept of degeneration and devolution; human beings can easily be changed into “lower forms”, yet the scene reveals that it is the room of high culture itself that leads one into the animal trap. Thus, culture and nature could not be separated or differentiated into two realms. Degeneration anxiety, which was based on the idea of human ascendancy and separation from other beings, is thus challenged by blurring the boundary of the human and the animal. This blurring, however, turns the worm into threat of human identity and leads to the plan to eradicate the worm.

The White Worm’s degenerative quality suggests the twilight zone of beings and even qualities as degeneration, or decomposition, causes the state of in-betweenness, or the state of non-state. Degeneration could be seen as process of decay and rebirth, both at the same time. However, the capitalist single and linear temporal axis, which was used to support the idea of human evolution and the coloniser’s superiority, cannot locate the opposite processes, of death and birth, within the same linear time frame. Dinosaurs, in the Victorian period, thus only became the reminders of decay and extinction, not of rebirth or simply transformation in nature. This could be seen in the dinosaur

exhibits in Crystal Palace Dinosaur Park. According to Nancy Rose Marshall, visitors were terrified and unsettled since the position of exhibits in the park could signify degeneration, by starting at Victorian modernisation and ending with dinosaurs. Moreover, the dinosaur exhibits were also threatening because its grotesque formlessness had invoked, in the press, association with mud and excrement.¹⁰⁹ The mud/excrement comparison is certainly linked with the idea of putrefaction and degeneration and challenges the boundary between the civilised and the savage, or even, temporally, the forward and the backward. In the novel, this same idea is clearly seen in the description of the malodour at the orifice. The smell could be compared to death, bodily decay, as well as non-organic matter such as chemicals and poisons. The mixture defies language and symbolisation. Eventually, the decomposed mixture of both organic and non-organic matter is called “primaeval ooze”¹¹⁰, a term which fixes this chemical compound to the past. However, Adam cannot deny its physical presence in the present. The past and the present have overlapped, and thus challenged the capitalist linear timeline. This idea emphasises that decline can await in the future, as well as progress.

¹⁰⁹ Nancy Rose Marshall, “A Dim World, Where Monsters Dwell’: The Spatial Time of the Sydenham Crystal Palace Dinosaur Park,” 297.

¹¹⁰ Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*, 1998, 122.

No matter how greatly the imagination about degeneration terrifies them and no matter how clearly human beings symbolise dinosaurs as creatures of degeneration, the end of the novel shows how these terrifying imaginations become physically real by their own hands, not by the nature of the dinosaurian creature. The novel reveals that “human” characters try to label the unreadable Chthulucene member, the White Worm, with the concept of both moral and physical degeneration, and their reading is made physical by their own plan of eradicating the symbol of degeneration. However, the detonation of the dynamite by the “human” characters shows the real, physical, and tangible process of degeneration and decomposition. The destruction of the White Worm reveals materiality of life and also poses an ethical question about the plan.

The scene of exorcism of this Chthulucene member reveals the interconnection of organic and non-organic matter, of the past and the present, of different species, and also of life and death. The eruption from the orifice caused by the dynamite is compared to volcano: “Great stones were thrown up as from a volcano...”,¹¹¹ and reveals the primitiveness of the scene as well as the combination of organic and non-organic matter. The scene resembles the volcanic destruction at the time of the dinosaurs. The movement of the earth, caused by the dynamite, is also vital

¹¹¹ Ibid, 220.

and life-like. The carcasses also move as if they were alive. “Many of the awful fragments were of something which had lately been alive. They quivered and trembled and writhed as though they were in torment, a supposition to which the unending scream gave a horrible credence.”¹¹² The situation shows that life is mixed up with death, and even the dead could seem alive. The destruction of the border between life and death suggests an imagined agency of things, or non-organic matter, and this imagination about non-organic matter challenges anthropocentrism, which considers human beings main and the most important agents. Furthermore, the scream which is heard could be interpreted as highlighting human violence and the agency of the nonhuman. The combination of the carcasses also shows how the truth about the White Worm, such as its transformation into Lady Arabella March, and its whole body, cannot be known and categorised.

The long terrifying description of the explosion and the carcasses could highlight the unethical aspect of the restoration of human domination. The recognition of violence they have made is seen with Sir Nathaniel saying, “Well her ladyship didn’t deserve such a funeral, or such a monument.” Yet, he ignored the loss by adding, “But all’s well that ends well.”¹¹³ Haraway believes in regeneration, and yet death and loss have to be

¹¹² Ibid, 219.

¹¹³ Ibid, 224.

mourned; the myth of immortality does not help regenerate the natural and cultural world. Mourning suggests value of life, but Sir Nathaniel refuses to mourn in the end. The physical reality of the decomposing carcasses still reminds human beings with degeneration as well as contamination and combination with other nonhuman entities, with the assemblages of organic and non-organic matter, as well as a great number of species. The scene of explosion reveals how anthropocentric imagination could finally threaten human identity, by describing the non-vital matter as alive and suffering from the power of the dynamite.

The end of the novel signifies the restart of the Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and Plantationocene as the eradication of the White Worm paves the way for the quarry for white china clay. Yet, the restoration of human domination is subtly questioned by the “human” characters themselves. The carcasses, after the explosion, are even more horrifying for both Adam Salton and Sir Nathaniel De Salis when the bodily decay occurs at the site of violence, or the process of being is revealed to be “compost”/ “composed” of many other beings. Adam describes the scene:

Now the whole mass seemed to have become all at once corrupt, But that corruption was not all. It seemed to have attracted every natural organism which was in itself obnoxious. The whole surface of the fragments, once alive, were covered with insects, worms, and vermin of all kinds.¹¹⁴

The process of decay is a part of the ongoing transformation, of making kin with the earth-bound. The repulsion of the mud, which was concerned with the imagination about dinosaurs, shows how the assemblages of organic and non-organic matter troubled the human-dominated Victorian world. Death could bring life and regeneration as insects feed on the carcasses, and yet the process of regeneration is seen by Adam Salton as decay and degeneration, highlighting how evil creates only evil. The label, however, also shows human beings' failure to eliminate evil since the destruction attracts "every natural organism which was in itself obnoxious." In the end, the death of the White Worm has to be confirmed by Sir Nathaniel, and yet the confirmation shows uncertainty. When both Adam Salton and Sir Nathaniel de Salis see "a shining mass of white, which looked strangely out of place amongst the wreckage as they had been viewing."¹¹⁵ When Adam desires to go back to the site again, Sir Nathaniel

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 223 - 224.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 224.

forbids him, saying, “We need not go down; I know what it is[,]”¹¹⁶ and explaining that it is the mass of white china clay. The idea suggests the return of the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene, the capitalisation of natural resources, and yet it shows uncertainty instead since Sir Nathaniel forbids Adam Salton to see it. The shining mass of white could be something else; it could even be the White Worm, which is not killed by the dynamite. The peace in the end of the novel is not strongly affirmed, and the human beings, in the end, are just at the beginning of their return to power, which is still challenged.

The dinosaurian figure of the White Worm challenges human beings still, though it is dead, or seems dead. Dinosaurs, with the influence of Darwin’s evolution, suggested devolution in the Victorian period, and thus became symbols of degeneration and devolution. The White Worm shows the complexities of degeneration even more, with its mixture of several dichotomies and ever-changing body, or bodies, of human and animal. The complexities emphasise human’s impossibility of explaining and fixing the nonhuman. Moreover, the “human” characters, who profess their love of animals and sympathy for suffering animals, eventually eliminates an animal which challenges and questions their power. However, the eradication haunts them and challenges them with the idea of interconnection and de-

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 224.

generation. The apparent death of The White Worm could suggest human victory, and, conversely, the rebirth of other repulsive monsters.

5. Conclusion:

The “ Quintessence of Dust ”

“What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god – the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? ...”¹¹⁷

The quotation from Hamlet challenges anthropocentrism, though they seem to praise all human quality as human beings are reasonable, ambidextrous, laudable, and Godly. However, with the short question by Hamlet, the description of the human glory was questioned. Human beings were seen to be only dust, or consist of dust. For this, Hibbard explains that the idea of human beings as the composition of dust comes from medieval philosophy, which considers dust latent in everything and fun-

¹¹⁷ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: The Oxford Shakespeare*, 218 - 219.

damental for the heavenly bodies.¹¹⁸ Hamlet has reduced human, “the paragon of animals” to dust, which could also signify death, as in “dust to dust, ashes to ashes.”

I have argued that Haraway’s Chthulucene idea about kinship also derives from Hamlet by Shakespeare. *The Lair of the White Worm* by Bram Stoker can be compared with Hamlet, with avuncular figure as well as the tyrannical King and lecherous Queen like Edgar Caswall and Lady Arabella. Though there is no brooding Hamlet in the novel, the readers of *The Lair* get to meet a determined, unreasonably, Fortinbras like Adam Salton instead, with Polobius-like Sir Nathaniel at his side. Yet, the novel does not mourn for human beings’ inferiority, degeneration, and even death; it supports every action to establish human identity, despite their ironies and contradictions.

The nineteenth-century repulsion and rejection of dust suggests the anxiety about contamination, death, and degeneration of the human beings, the fear that, some time, human beings would devolve into a lower creature. What reveals human as degenerate or reveals the fact that all beings degenerate would be eradicated, though the eradication would never lead to the end of terror. The novel shows how the eradication of dinosaurs and the New Woman figure shows no obvious change to the

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 219.

terror about them.

New Woman, who seems to have no desire to marry and seeks her own agency, and dinosaurs, large extinct animals, could show that the future of the human may include the end of its own race. Thus, the plan to eradicate them shows the attempt to differentiate oneself from them, to create the anthropocentrically comprehensible world with separable and distinguishable species. This is opposed to Haraway's idea of reciprocal ongoing transformation, with no end for any critters. The repulsion over dust suggests human attempt to deny that they are a part of the earth, and they are not kin to other beings, especially those that question their identities.

The Lair of the White Worm by Bram Stoker is full of ironies. The novel shows the need to continue the human race and critique the New Woman figure who has mercenary plans for marriage, and yet shows the importance of homosocial kinship. Also, the protagonist overcomes the huge beast, a Chthulucene member, to establish a human-dominated world, and yet the power of human beings to know, understand, and control non-human entities is challenged, as well as the violence caused in the end question their humaneness. Justification of violence against Lady Arabella March and the White Worm is always disrupted and questioned, yet the violence is committed anyway.

The return to the earth in the novel is not the recognition that human beings, as well as others, are “the quintessence of dust,” it is the desire to capitalise nature. The dust which ends the novel is the white china clay, which is found in great amount in the residence of the White Worm. The novel leaves us with a little hope that the shining mass of white in the novel could be something else, something that could let human beings learn that they are kin to other beings, and other non-beings and share some similarities with them. It is the idea of progress that terrifies human since it causes the anxiety about degeneration, the fear of dust. The Chthulucene concept brings about the question about time and entities; it includes the past, the present, and the future of ourselves within the same timeline. It suggests the reciprocal reaction of agents in the world. These two concepts could lead to peaceful cohabitation. The world of cohabitation is where, in the human point of view, human beings realise they are not the only agents of the universe, and there are no fixed identities as beings, as well as non-beings, because there are connections. We are all kin. We all contain the opposing dichotomies: male and female, homosexual and heterosexual, human and animal, organic and non-organic matter, nature and culture and, especially, life and death. We all are, were made of, and are still being made by, the quintessence of dust.

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